DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 402 410 UD 031 434

AUTHOR Volk, Dinah
TITLE Continuities and Discontinuities in Question Use: Puerto Rican Kindergartners at Home and at School. Research Report #11.
INSTITUTION Cleveland State Univ., OH. Urban Child Research Center.
PUB DATE 95
NOTE 39p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavior Patterns; Bilingual Education; Educational Practices; Ethnography; Family Environment; Hispanic Americans; Kindergarten; *Kindergarten Children; *Parent Child Relationship; Primary Education; *Puerto Ricans; *Questioning Techniques; Spanish Speaking; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Continuity; *Discontinuity; Hispanic American Students; Latinos; Questions

ABSTRACT

This study explores continuities and discontinuities between patterns of question use during lessons in a bilingual classroom and in the homes of two Spanish-dominant Puerto Rican kindergartners. Ethnographic techniques, including participant observation, audiotaping, and interviews were used to collect data in the classroom and the homes over the course of 1 school year. Qualitative and quantitative techniques were integrated into the data analysis. Both continuities and discontinuities were found in question use in the two settings. The teacher used three patterns of questioning, including the recitation script which is associated with teacher-centered lessons in school. The mothers used the same script in lessons, though the children participated more actively in the script at home than they did at school. Question use was more elaborated in school, and requests for clarification were used more frequently at home. Implications for teaching practice and for further research with Latino families are discussed, as is the need to recognize and build on the convergence of language use and interaction practices in homes and schools. (Contains 3 tables and 37 references.) (Author/SLD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 402 410

Research Report #11

Continuities and Discontinuities in Question Use: Puerto Rican Kindergartners at Home and at School

by

Dinah Volk

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

W. L. Reed
UCRC

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dr. Dinah Volk is an Associate Professor in the Early Childhood Program of the Department of Specialized Instructional Programs in the College of Education at Cleveland State University
Copyright ©1995, Urban Child Research Center.This research was supported in part by The Faculty Associate Program of the Urban Child Research Center.

UD031U34

Through this series of publications the Urban Child Research Center is making available copies of selected reports of research conducted under the auspices of the Center. The analyses and conclusions contained in these papers are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions or endorsements of the Urban Child Research Center or Cleveland State University. For information on publications of the Urban Child Research Center, please contact us at the address below:

Wornie L. Reed, Director
Urban Child Research Center
Levin College of Urban Affairs
Cleveland State University
Cleveland, Ohio 44115

Abstract

This study explores continuities and discontinuities between patterns of question use during lessons in a bilingual classroom and in the homes of two Spanish-dominant Puerto Rican kindergartners. Ethnographic techniques including participant observation, audiotaping, and interviews were used to collect data in the classroom and the homes over the course of one school year. Qualitative and quantitative techniques were integrated in the data analysis.

Both continuities and discontinuities were found in question use in the two settings. The teacher used three patterns of questioning, including the recitation script which is associated with teacher-centered lessons in school. The mothers used the same script in lessons, though the children participated more actively in the script at home than they did at school. Question use was more elaborated in school; requests for clarification were used more frequently at home.

Implications for teaching practice and for further research with Latino families are discussed as is the need to recognize and build on the convergence of language use and interaction practices in homes and schools.

Since 1947, the Cleveland-Lorain-Youngstown area of northeastern Ohio has been home to large, stable Puerto Rican communities. In 1985, there were 33,000 Hispanics in these areas and about 90% were Puerto Rican. Today there are 5,720 Latino children—labelled "Spanish surname"—in the Cleveland Public Schools (CPS); they represent 7.4% of the school population. Over 2,500 or 45% have been identified as Spanish dominant and, when parents do not request an exemption, have been placed in bilingual classes. They represent 76% of all the children in the CPS Bilingual Program. The other 55% of the Latino children in Cleveland have been judged to be English-dominant and able to function in English-only classes (CPS Bilingual-Multicultural Program Office, 1995).

Latino children have both the highest dropout rate of any group and the city's lowest average reading scores (Vishnevsky, 1991). According to a recent report (de Acosta, 1993), over 73% of Latino children in Cleveland Public Schools come from families living below the poverty level. Though the Cleveland school district's Office of Research and Analysis monitors the achievement of all language-minority children, there is no research other than this project being conducted with Latino children in Cleveland schools. Clearly, there is a need for more information, not just about their increasing school problems, but also about the strengths and competencies they bring from their homes into school settings. As school populations become increasingly diverse, information of this kind becomes critical to a perspective that values educational equity and cultural and linguistic diversity.

Toward this end, the purposes of this project are: (1) to add to a growing body of descriptive studies on the language-use patterns and competencies of language-minority children and their opportunities for learning at home; and (2) to contribute to the ongoing debate in the literature about continuities and discontinuities between the home and school settings of linguistically and culturally diverse children. This latter work describes similarities (continuities) and differences (discontinuities) in cultural aspects such as language and scripts for conduct between homes and schools and explores their relation to children's school achievements.

The subjects of this research were two Spanish-dominant Puerto Rican kindergartners who were observed and tape recorded in naturally occurring interactions at home with their parents, siblings, and relatives and in a bilingual classroom with their teacher and peers. The theme of the study was continuities and discontinuities in question use between the two settings. For this

paper, the focus was narrowed to question use in interactions between children and adults. Continuities and discontinuities in question use in interactions the adults defined as lessons or teaching situations were explored.

Theoretical Framework

Continuities and Discontinuities

Recent research (Heath, 1986; Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1987) has demonstrated that there are both cultural and class differences in the language-use patterns in families. Much of this research has described patterns in Latino families in the United States (Attinasi, Pedraza, Poplack, & Pousada, 1982; Azmitia, Cooper, & Garcia, 1992; Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1993; Pease-Alvarez & Vazquez, 1994). Some of this work focuses broadly on language use within whole communities; most has studied Mexican-Americans. There has been very little research on Puerto Rican families and on young children in both home and school settings.

Just as differing styles have been identified between families of different cultural groups, so too have distinct styles of language use been identified in schools (Cazden, 1988; Heath, 1986; MacLure & French, 1981).

Some researchers (Cazden, 1988; Heath, 1986) maintain that the mutually exclusive nature of home-school discontinuities in language use as well as similar discontinuities in interaction patterns helps to explain the school failures of many poor minority children. Research with poor African-American, Anglo, and Mexican-American families suggests that adults provide a rich language environment for children but rarely or never use teacher talk, a school-identified form of language use (Pease-Alvarez & Vasquez, 1994). As a consequence, children's lack of achievement in school is tied to their inability to participate in interactions where they do not know the script and to teachers' common assumption that this inability reflects resistance, laziness, or lack of content mastery.

Other researchers, all British, (MacLure & French, 1981; Tizard & Hughes, 1984; Wells, 1986) maintain that home-school discontinuities are characterized by varying frequencies in the use of the same forms and practices. In their research, elements of teacher talk were used by

white working-class parents though not as frequently as their children's teachers used them. Children's school failure, according to this position, lies in the inadequacies of their schools and low expectations, not differences in language use.

Still others (Azmitia et al., 1992; Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1993; Weisner, Gallimore, & Jordan, 1993) argue that these generalizations about continuities and discontinuities have led researchers to oversimplify the issue, to focus on discontinuities and ignore similarities, and to create stereotypes by ignoring differences between families from the same culture.

Previous research by this author with three English-dominant Puerto Rican kindergartners (Volk, 1995, in press) confirms this third position. That work revealed important continuities in language use between the home and school settings as well as variations among the families. For example, two of the mothers used teacher talk in activities they defined as school-related, providing their children with experiences with the traditional school script. A third mother never used teacher talk though she provided other interactive language experiences for her child. In all three homes, learning interactions were also initiated by the children.

Question Use

Adults in many cultures frequently use questions in their interactions with children to engage them in talk and to help them learn culturally appropriate styles of verbal interaction (Heath, 1982). Distinct styles of questioning have been identified in homes of different cultures and economic classes and in schools (Heath, 1982; Moreno, 1991; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988), used by children and adults (MacLure & French, 1981; Tizard & Hughes, 1984), as used in Spanish and English (Heath, 1982; Rodriguez-Brown, 1987). In particular, teachers' use of questions has been shown to be an important component of teacher talk. Research suggests that children's ability to respond to teachers' questions appropriately is critical to classroom participation.

Teacher talk is characterized by familiar question types: known information questions used to assess children's knowledge ("Where do eggs come from?"); unfinished declaratives used as known information questions ("We stay home on Saturday and...?"); questions used as polite, non-explicit directives ("Would you like to sit down now?"); questions requesting attention that are used as devices for focusing on important information ("Remember that story we read last

week?"). Along with the initiation-response-evaluation (IRE) sequence (Mehan, 1979), these features of *teacher talk* are part of what has been called a recitation script that involves both teachers and students.

The recitation script is structured around a string of assessment or known information questions used by the teacher that are rarely contingent on students' responses. The teacher's aim is to elicit correct answers and to have children display their knowledge without assistance so that it can be assessed, rather than to help children elaborate or reflect on what they have said. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) contrast assessment questions with assistance questions which "inquire in order to produce a mental operation that the pupil cannot or would not produce alone. The assistance provided by the question is the prompting of that mental operation" (p. 60). Tharp and Gallimore go on to assert that assistance questions are rarely used in school and are more likely to be heard in home contexts.

Research Methodology

The ethnographic methodology used in this study was derived from similar studies of language use and interaction patterns in home and school settings (Gregory, 1993; Heath, 1982; McCollum, 1989). An assumption underlying the techniques used is that language use is a meaningful process that is carried out systematically. Thus, the researcher records communicative events and contextual information, then analyzes the data and identifies the inherent patterns. While she must be careful about generalizing about these patterns on the basis of work with only a few subjects, the findings from such studies provide rich descriptions that illuminate natural occurrences and provide useful insights and information from the subjects' perspectives. Such work also establishes the basis for further research.

Data collection was conducted during one school year in a bilingual kindergarten and in the homes of two Spanish-dominant Puerto Rican children. Participant observation took place throughout the year in both settings. The two subjects were recorded six times at home talking to their parents, siblings, and relatives; tapings lasted for between one and three hours. The entire three-hour morning kindergarten session was recorded seven times; each child was present for six tapings and was recorded talking to the teacher and peers. Observation time totalled almost 35

hours in the homes and 50 hours at school.

Many conversations were held with the teacher and parents in addition to formal interviews. Discussions with the teacher explored her understanding of emerging patterns in the data and of the developmental kindergarten assessments administered to the children in the fall and spring of that year.

Recorded conversations were transcribed and translated by an assistant, a native Spanish speaker who is Puerto Rican and fluent in English. Six thousand and twenty-two questions were identified in conversations between the children and adults. The questions were coded for form and function, language, setting, personnel, group size, and task (see Appendix). Frequencies and percentages were calculated for the formal and functional categories in relation to the other variables. An analysis that integrated the quantitative data and the qualitative data from the field notes and interviews made it possible to identify and compare patterns of question use within the patterns of interaction in the two settings.

Setting and Subjects

Children and their Families

The two subjects were Mónica and Nelson[1]. Mónica was 4.11 years old in September and Nelson was 5.9 years old. Both are Puerto Rican and were Spanish dominant. For the purposes of this study, Spanish dominants were defined as nonbalanced bilinguals who use Spanish more competently than English. Mónica and Nelson were initially designated as Spanish monolinguals by the school system which assesses new students with a Spanish surname with the Language Assessment Battery, an instrument widely used by school systems to determine language dominance. As the year progressed, they began to use and understand some English in school, maintaining a clear dominance in their native language. Conversations taped between Mónica and Nelson and their parents and teacher were primarily in Spanish.

Mónica lived with her parents, Nydia and Norberto, and her 1-1/2 and 10-year-old sisters in a small apartment building. The family had come from Puerto Rico three years before. Mónica's

[1] Pseudonyms were used for all subjects in the study.

father was a minister who had completed more than three years of a university program in special education in Puerto Rico. Mónica's mother was a homemaker who had completed high school in Puerto Rico.

Nelson lived with his parents, Brenda and Miguel, 7 and 17 year old brothers, and 14 year old sister in the back apartment of a wood frame house. His 19-year-old brother and his wife lived nearby as did several other relatives. The family had settled in the city less than a year before, after living in New York City and Puerto Rico. Nelson's father worked in a factory; his mother had never worked outside the home because of a bad back. The parents attended high school in Puerto Rico through the tenth grade.

The tapings were conducted in the afternoons during the week and on Saturday. When Mónica and Nelson came home from school, they ate, took baths, changed their clothes, played by themselves, and watched television. When their older siblings came home, they talked, argued—sometimes intensely—and played together. Mónica played store or school, colored with crayons, rode her tricycle, and listened to her two records in English. On two occasions, she asked her mother, Nydia, about the meaning of English words she had heard on the records and in school. Nelson played with action figures, studied his baseball cards, played Connect Four, threw a football, and did jigsaw puzzles. In both homes, family and friends sometimes sat around the kitchen table or the living room talking. The children sat with them and, occasionally, joined in. Sometimes older siblings, Mónica, and Nelson did homework. Mónica and Nelson also colored as they sat with others; once Nelson wrote his name and numbers, asking for help as he worked. His family urged him to perform some school songs and teased him about not wanting to milk a cow on a school field trip. Mónica gave directions to the younger children, tried to sell her aunt stickers, and was teased about her high heel boots.

The mothers cleaned, cooked and served food, shopped and took laundry to the laudromat, sewed, and watched television. They talked on the phone, talked with their children—especially the older ones—and with visiting family and friends. They checked to make sure all their children did their homework and refereed their arguments. When Brenda, Nelson's mother, was alone with him, she listened to him sing songs he had learned in school. At times, the children helped with chores such as dusting, cleaning, and putting away groceries. When the fathers were home,

they joined in the ongoing flow of talk or watched television with their families. Miguel helped Nelson's 7-year-old brother with homework; Norberto cleaned the fish tank with Mónica's help.

Once during the observations, Nydia drew some shapes and numbers, and asked Mónica to identify them. She then got out some alphabet blocks and asked Mónica to put the letters in order. They talked about the blocks as Mónica worked and Mónica asked her mother to ask her which of her towers were the tallest. On another occasion, Nydia played a series of tic-tac-toe games with Mónica. Similarly, Brenda read "Hansel and Gretel" in Spanish to Nelson, asking him to repeat each phrase after her. Using a Spanish primer, she helped him read the syllables and words. Another day, she played many games of connect-the-dots with him.

Mónica and Nelson's play with their older siblings often involved instruction too. Nelson's older brothers worked with him on a puzzle, sharing strategies for matching pieces. His sister quizzed him on the colors of the Connect Four checkers, then Nelson initiated a game in which they guessed how many checkers the other was holding. Mónica's sister colored with her, showed her how to draw a house, driveway, and castle, and quizzed her on color names. When Mónica rode her tricycle, her sister showed her how to ride correctly.

Like other poor minority parents described in the literature (Azmitia et al., 1994; Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1993), Mónica and Nelson's parents valued education and understood its importance in their children's lives. They proudly described the skills and information that their children were mastering and how they had taught them to write their names, count, learn their colors, and practice English. Mónica's parents said they did not do enough though "...uno trata de dar a los hijos lo que no tuvo" [...one tries to give children what you didn't have"]. Nelson's father asserted that parents bore a responsibility for teaching their children the basics.

> No le echamos toda la carga a la maestra. Cuando ellos van a la escuela ellos ya tienen algo donde la carga es más liviana. Por eso es que casi siempre no tenemos problemas cuando los nenes de nosotros van a la escuela. Las maestras dicen, "Yo no tengo ningún problema con él porque domina más rápido." Pero él domina porque es que nosotros aquí ya le hemos ayudado bastante.

> [We don't place all the burden on the teacher. When they go to school they have something and the burden is lighter. That's why we almost never have problems when our children go to school. The teachers say "I don't have any problem with him because he learns things fast." But he learns them because we have helped him a lot.]

Despite some difficulties their older children were having in school, both sets of parents said they expected their children to do well because they had provided some academic preparation and because they had taught their children to respect their teachers. In fact, both Mónica and Nelson did do well in the years after kindergarten. Nelson received an award in first grade as the best student in his class. In second grade, Mónica received As in all subjects.

Though the children participated in many interactions at home that facilitated their learning, these parents—like others described in the literature (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1993; Gregory, 1994; Rogoff, 1990)—identified the interactions consisting of direct instruction of academic content by an adult as "teaching." When asked how they had learned to do this, they explained that they taught Mónica and Nelson as they had been taught in school, as they had observed teachers doing, as teachers had instructed them, or as they had learned from working with older siblings.

It could be argued that the mothers engaged their children in direct instruction during the tapings because of the presence of the observer and the tape recorders. While it is possible that these artifacts of the research process did elicit more frequent teaching behaviors and language than was typical, it is clear from the interviews and observations that the parents knew how to teach their children in this way and did so because they felt it was important to support their children's education. In addition, elements of the recitation script were recorded in other interactions less subject to the influence of the observer: play activities with older siblings that integrated academic content; interactions initiated by Mónica and Nelson that focused on academic content; Mónica's talk when she played school; instances of teasing and disciplining by older family members.

The parents distinguished teaching, as described above, from play. Though they had

provided their children with many toys such as a cash register and puzzles that facilitated their learning, they were rarely seen to engage in play with their children. Unlike many middle class American parents, they believed that children played on their own or with other children (Rogoff, Mosier, Mistry & Goncu, 1993). During the observations, the only exceptions were the paper and pencil games that each mother played with her child.

The School and the Teacher

The Thompson School, a pseudonym for a school in the Cleveland School District, enrolled 660 children in kindergarten through third grade. The school population was 47%, African American; 27%, Other; and 22%, designated as "Spanish surname." The families of 90% of the children in the school received public assistance (Thompson Elementary School, 1992-1993). Both Mónica and Nelson lived outside the immediate neighborhood of the school and were bused in to participate in the bilingual program.

Mrs. Martin, the teacher, was in her fourth year as a bilingual teacher. She is a Puerto Rican who grew up in Puerto Rico and was educated there, in both Spanish and English. She attended college on the U.S. mainland and has since taken master's level courses in both bilingual and special education. Mrs. Martin is assisted by a bilingual aide, ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher, and by a volunteer mother who comes in every day.

The year of the study, Mrs. Martin's morning kindergarten consisted of 28 children, all native Spanish speakers with varying degrees of English proficiency. Most were Puerto Rican with a few individuals from the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Central America. Mrs. Martin used Spanish primarily when teaching and slowly introduced English through songs and games. She usually told the children when they would be speaking English and only switched back to Spanish when they had difficulty understanding her or expressing themselves.

The morning session began with a whole group lesson integrating a review of the calendar and weather, alphabet songs, discussion of a theme topic and children's related experiences, and a singing and movement activity. Next, Mrs. Martin worked with small groups organized by language proficiency, teaching active, theme-related lessons. They made graphs of their favorite African animals and of the colors of jelly beans, practiced dialing 911, played rhyming card games, and learned poems about houses and the weather. Other children were assigned to work on

additional activities independently or with the aide or parent volunteer or to play in the housekeeping center or with manipulative or art materials, games, books, or blocks. The morning ended with another group time that often included a story and further discussion of concepts and experiences. Watching videotapes, cooking, and other activities such as playing in the snow often varied this routine. ESL classes and trips to the gym and library occurred weekly.

Mrs. Martin explained that she believed in maintaining and expanding children's abilities in Spanish as they learned English. She also felt it was important to provide positive images of Puerto Rican culture while introducing the children to mainstream American culture. Puerto Rico Heritage Day was celebrated with a program organized by several classes with informal but frequent references to Puerto Rico and children's experiences there. Thanksgiving was celebrated with turkey, stuffing, and cranberry sauce made by the children. Mrs. Martin believed that she could help the children become successful in school by providing an environment in which they would be comfortable and take risks as they grew in confidence and competence.

Mrs. Martin also felt that many of the children lacked a range of basic experiences and the vocabulary to describe them. Consequently, she felt it was necessary for her to provide experiences on which they could build "a picture in their minds." She used language to "prompt" and "guide" the children's thinking, to help them connect the experiences with words and articulate them. In addition, she organized many activities to facilitate the development of what she called "academic language not just outside experiential language."

Because Mrs. Martin believed strongly in the importance of play for children's learning, she provided time and materials for play though she was never observed to play with the children herself. She defined work as "more teacher directed and formal," while play was child-initiated and was engaged in when work was done. Mrs. Martin also felt that parents needed to learn about the value of play at home and at school.

Mrs. Martin described Latino children as very dependent on their parents and, as a consequence, passive and quiet in the classroom. She felt they needed to learn to be more independent and curious. At the same time, Mrs. Martin said that **she** was struggling to be less authoritarian. In some activities, with some children who were more verbal, she was learning to step back and let the children function more independently.

But, according to Mrs. Martin, many of the children had limited vocabulary and experiences that made her stepping back counterproductive. She explained that the children's limitations were caused by parents' tendency to "sequester" their families safely indoors and the belief that it was not their place to help their children academically.

Mrs. Martin felt that even parents who did provide experiences and verbal stimulation needed to do more to prepare their children for academic learning. So she shared materials for formal teaching with all the parents. She praised Nelson's parents for their support, noting that Nelson was doing well in school. She criticized Mónica's parents for disrupting her education by constant travelling and noted that Mónica was having trouble mastering what was being taught.

In addition to the difficulties of working with children unprepared for school, Mrs. Martin felt constrained in her teaching by factors within the school. She complained that the half-day kindergarten and the pressures from first grade teachers to teach all children numbers and letters meant that she had little time for needed experiences, inquiry learning, and one-to-one interactions with the children.

Research Findings

The following discussion of research findings is based on the analysis of question use in both settings with a focus on question use during lessons. Lessons were identified by the participation of children and adults, academic content or relevant experience, a self-described motive on the part of adults to convey the content to children, check their knowledge, or explore the experiences, and use of the recitation script. Lessons were the most common task in school and, in both homes, there was one long lesson plus a few fragments of adult instruction, no more than a few turns long, that were embedded in other activities. In addition, there were many instances of informal teaching and learning both at home and at school. At home, many of these informal interactions occurred when Mónica and Nelson were playing with their older siblings; many were initiated by the target children. Though critical to understanding learning and language use patterns in both settings, these interactions were not the subject of this paper.

Spanish and English

Almost 95% of all the questions used in both settings were in Spanish. In the homes, the children usually used English in conversations with older siblings and relatives. English was used

in school occasionally with the teacher and with peers during play.

Overall question use

There were 6022 questions used by adults and children in the conversations studied. Of those used in the classroom, 70% were in tasks coded as lessons with the whole group or small groups. Of those used in the homes, 10% were in two long, formal lessons and a few fragments. These figures reflect patterns in the qualitative data: the children and their teacher engaged frequently in lessons, and questions were used frequently in this setting; in the homes, lessons were much less frequent and questions were used less often. Nonetheless, lessons did occur in the homes and parents and children used questions more frequently during lessons than they did during other tasks.

Of the 3027 questions used in classroom lessons, 99% were used by the teacher and 1% were used by all the children in the class. During the approximately 21 hours of taping in the kindergarten, Mónica and Nelson used only 9 questions during lessons; they used only 18 questions altogether with the teacher. As in previous research (Volk, in press), the children in this classroom were the question-answerers while the teacher was the question-asker. Mrs. Martin dominated lessons as well as other tasks with her questions, using an average of almost 600 each morning. This surpasses the estimate of Morgan and Saxton (1991) in their book on questioning: they note that some teachers "ask far too many questions...between 300 and 400 questions on an average day" (p.80).

In the homes, in contrast, Mónica and Nelson asked questions much more frequently, about as frequently as their parents, both during lessons and during all the other tasks combined. During lessons, the parents used 51% of the 172 questions and Mónica and Nelson used 47%. Older siblings and relatives participated little in the lessons, using only 2% of the questions.

Three Scripts for Question Use in School

As shown in Table 1, there was little variety in the forms and functions of Mrs. Martin's questions. She used WH and Yes/No questions functioning as requests for known and unknown information most often[2]. During lessons, she used the recitation script consistently. WH

---

[2]WH questions consist of a clause or sentence beginning with an interrogative word such as "what" or "why" and ending with a question intonation (e.g. What is this?). Yes/No questions

questions requesting known information were used more frequently than during all the other tasks combined while Yes/No questions requesting unknown information were used much less frequently[3]. That is, most of the questions during lessons assessed children's knowledge of important information. Mrs. Martin was more likely to ask questions about children's experiences to which she did not have the answers in informal conversations. Requests by the teacher for clarification/ elaboration/repetition of the children's turns were even less frequent in lessons than in the other tasks. Requests to have the children confirm/ acknowledge her own turns were even rarer.[4]

---

consist of a clause or sentence ending with a question intonation that contains subject/verb inversion and/or an auxiliary verb for which an appropriate response would be of the yes/no type (e.g. Are you going to eat now? or Did you eat the cookie?). Also included in this category are intonation questions that consist of a word, clause, or sentence that has rising intonation and declarative word order for which an appropriate response would be of the yes/no type (e.g. You're going to eat now?).

[3]Since there was consistency in the use of certain forms for each function, the most frequent form-function combinations will be referred to here.

[4] For brevity's sake, these will be referred to as requests for clarification and requests for acknowledgement.

Table 1

Most Frequent Question Types Used in School in All Other Tasks and in Lessons

Task & Personnel	Question Type: Form type	%	Function type	%
All other tasks				
Teacher (N=1167)	WH ques	41	Known info	31
	YN ques	39	Unknown info	23
	Tag ques	7	Clar/elab/rep	14
			Conf/ack	9
Mónica & Nelson (N=9)	WH ques	56	Clar/elab/rep	56
	YN ques	22	Unknown info	44
	1 word ques	22		
All children (N=103)	YN ques	53	Unknown info	39
	WH ques	23	Permission	30
	Repetition	7	Clar/elab/rep	18
	1 word ques	6	Conf/ack	6
	Formulaic	6		
Lessons				
Teacher (N=2985)	WH ques	63	Known info	69
	YN ques	17	Unknown info	8
	Unfin dec	6	Clar/elab/rep	8
	Tag ques	6	Conf/ack	7
Mónica & Nelson (N=9)	YN ques	33	Clar/elab/rep	78
	1 word ques	33	Unknown info	11
	WH ques	11	Conf/ack	11
	Tag ques	11		
	Deictic	11		
All children (N=42)	YN ques	43	Clar/elab/rep	48
	WH ques	17	Unknown info	26
	1 word ques	10	Conf/ack	17
	Repetition	10	Permission	7
	Deictic	10		

Example 1 illustrates Mrs. Martin's use of the recitation script while reviewing the calendar with the group. She used a series of noncontingent assessment questions, many requesting known information, to elicit correct answers. The initiation-response-evaluation sequence was also evident: Mrs. Martin asked a question; a child responded; Mrs. Martin acknowledged and validated the response by repeating it.

Example 1

T: Viernes. Así que el último día que vinimos a la escuela fue el ocho de enero y fue viernes. ¿Qué viene después del número ocho? Qué número viene? ¿Mónica?
[Friday. So the last day that we came to school was January eighth and was Friday. What comes after number eight? What number is next? Mónica?]

Mo: Nueve.
[Nine.]

T: Y el nueve. ¿El nueve era que dia?
[And the ninth. The ninth was what day?]

Mo: El sábado.
[Saturday.]

T: El sábado ¿vinimos a la escuela?
[Saturday did we come to school?]

Grp: No.

T: No. ¿Que número viene después del nueve? ¿El?
[No. What number comes after nine? The?]

Grp: Diez.
[Ten.]

T: El diez. Y el diez ¿qué día de la semana era? ¿Julio?
[The tenth. And the tenth, what day of the week was it? Julio?]

Ju: Domingo.
[Sunday.]

T: Domingo ¿vinimos a la escuela?

[Sunday, did we come to school?]

Ju: No.

In addition to the recitation script, Mrs. Martin used two other distinct patterns of questioning during lessons. While the recitation script moved quickly from one question to the next, the second script consisted of a series of related assessment questions grouped in separate turns. Example 2 is also exerpted from a review of the calendar. The numbers up to seven had been displayed and Samuel had forgotten to indicate which number came next. Mrs. Martin asked progressively more specific questions, first about what he had forgotten, then hinting that he needed to say a number they had just discussed. When he still could not answer, she directed him to the numbers on the calendar, ending with the unfinished declarative "1 2 3 4 5 6 7 and?" This question required only that Samuel recite the next number from memory and was much easier to answer than the first indirect imperative that required knowledge of the calendar and of classroom procedures ("¿Qué se te olvidó hacer Samuel?"/"What did you forget to do Samuel?").

Example 2

T: ¿Qué se te olvidó hacer Samuel? Ven.
[What did you forget to do Samuel? Come.]

Vi: Ah ah ah ah ah.

T: Shsh Victor ok. ¿Qué se te olvidó? ¿Dónde va? ¿Qué día dijimos que era hoy? ¿Qué número?
[Shsh Victor ok. What did you forget? Where does it go? What day did we say it was today? What number?]

Ch: Dieciocho.
[Eighteen.]

T: ¿El dieciocho?
[The eighteenth?]

Ch: No.

Ch: Ocho ocho ocho ocho.
[Eight eight eight eight.]

T: ¿Cuál es el último número que se ve allí Samuel? ¿Cuál es el último número que que después

no hay nada? Samuel. ¿Qué último número hay aquí después de ese número tú no ves más ningunos números? Uno dos tres cuatro cinco seis siete ¿y?
[What is last number that you see there Samuel? What is the last number that that after it there's nothing? Samuel. What last number is here after that number you don't see any more numbers? One two three four five six seven and?]

Grp: Ocho ocho ocho.
[Eight eight eight.]

Sa: Ocho.
[Eight.]

T: Ocho. Después de ocho ¿tú ves algún otro número? Ese es el último número que contamos, ¿verdad? Ok.
[Eight. After the eight, do you see any other number? That is the last number we count, right? Ok.]

Mrs. Martin said her goal when using this script was to "prompt" children's thinking, reflecting the definition of assistance questions that "prompt" children's thinking "in order to produce a mental operation that the pupil cannot or will not produce alone" (Tharp & Gallimore, p. 60). Yet, while Mrs. Martin's prompting guaranteed Samuel's participation, her belief that he was unprepared for a more complex level of participation may have led her to use questions that allowed him to rely on old knowledge rather than questions that provided scaffolding for new ways of thinking and talking.

Mrs. Martin used this prompting script with children who had difficulty participating in the recitation script. While it is difficult to generalize from her few interactions with Mónica and Nelson, it appears that she did not use prompting with Nelson who usually responded readily with correct answers. She did use it with Mónica who sometimes had difficulty responding to known information questions. Both children participated in lessons in which all three scripts or patterns were used.

The third pattern of questioning came closer to providing assistance though it was still teacher-centered. It was similar to the questioning that occurred in informal interactions when Mrs. Martin asked many unknown information questions about children's experiences and when the children often talked at length. In Example 3, during a discussion of the spring weather, she asked open-ended questions ("¿Nadie hizo nada bueno ayer afuera?"/"Nobody did anything good outside yesterday?"), requested elaboration ("¿Cuándo? ¿Hace mucho tiempo o este fin de semana?"/"When? A long time ago or this weekend?") and modeled the use of Spanish vocabulary ("¿Con una bola de baloncesto?"/ "With a basketball?"). In contrast to their participation in the other two scripts, the children talked more here and were able to demonstrate their thinking to a greater degree.

Example 3

T: Quie-. ¿Nadie hizo nada bueno ayer afuera? ¿Nadie salió a jugar? [Who-. Nobody did anything good yesterday outside? Nobody went out to play?]

T: Mónica ¿qué tú hiciste ayer? [Mónica what did you do yesterday?]

Mo: El el sábado yo vi a un un programa que se llamaba Nube Luz y después cuando llegaron mis tías y mis primos yo yo fui afuera y jugué. [On Saturday I saw a a program called Light Clouds and then when my aunts and my cousin came I went outside to play.]

T: Ah //así que se...// [Ah so you...]

Mo: //Con la bicicleta.// [With my bicycle.]

T: Con la bicicleta también. Que rico. Ofelia ¿qué tú hiciste? [With your bicycle too. How great. Ofelia what did you do?]

T: Mm y ¿alguien alguien jugó en un parque con columpios o chorreas? Samuel ¿tú jugaste así? [Mm and did someone someone play in the park with swings and slides? Samuel did you play like that?]

Sa: Un día yo fui para la playa. [One day I went to the beach.]

T: ¿Fuiste a la playa? ¿Cuándo? ¿Hace mucho tiempo o este fin de semana? //¿Ayer?// [You went to the beach? When? A long time ago or this weekend? Yesterday?]

Sa: //Un día.// [One day.]

T: ¿Ah?

Sa: Un día. Cuando no cuando no era [sic] escuela. [One day. When when there wasn't school.]

T: Cuando no había escuela. Y ¿qué hiciste en la playa? [When there wasn't school. And what did you do at the beach?]

Sa: Yo poni [sic] un basketball. Y juegué [sic]. Y le gane a mi hermano. [I putted a basketball. And played. And I beat my brother.]

T: ¿Tú qué? [You what?]

Sa: Po-poni un basketball hoop. [I pu-putted a basketball hoop.]

T: O jugaste con un basketball. ¿Con una bola de baloncesto? ¿Sí? ¿Quién más jugó ayer afuera? Dime.

[Oh you played with a basketball. With a basketball? Who else played outside yesterday? Tell me.]

The children's use of questions was different from the teacher's. In tasks other than lessons, the children used Yes/No and WH questions as requests for unknown information, permission, and clarification most frequently. Requests for confirmation were used less often. The most notable differences between their question use during other tasks and during lessons were the much more frequent use of requests for clarification during lessons and the less frequent use of requests for unknown information. Requests for confirmation were used somewhat more frequently. These differences reflect the children's need to focus on what the teacher was saying during lessons rather than on what they wanted to say or do. There was no corresponding increase in the teacher's requests for clarification or confirmation during lessons.

One Script for Question Use at Home

As shown in Table 2, there was less difference between the questioning of adults and children in the homes. In tasks other than lessons, parents and children both used Yes/No and WH questions as requests for unknown information and clarification most frequently. Clarification of the speech partner's talk was a feature of both parents' and children's questioning. The parents did request known information more frequently than the children and the children used one word questions and deictics more frequently.

Both mothers conducted one long lesson with their children, using questions in a pattern similar to the teacher's in the recitation script. There was less functional variety in the questioning: over three-fourths of their questions were requests for known information. In contrast to the other tasks, requests for clarification were rarely used by the mothers during lessons. Even unfinished declaratives, a characteristic of the teacher's questioning, appeared in their speech. Unlike the teacher, the mothers used deictics often, primarily to request known information.

Mónica and Nelson's use of questions during lessons at home was similar to their question use during lessons in school. Requests for clarification were more frequent and requests for unknown information were less frequent. They requested clarification of the parents' turns much more often than the parents requested clarification of their's. Like their parents, they used deictics and other one-word questions much more often than the teacher. Overall, they talked less during lessons in both settings, though they asked questions more frequently during lessons at home.

Example 4 consists of parts of a lesson conducted by Nelson's mother, Brenda, with a

Table 2

Most Frequent Question Types Used at Home in All Other Tasks and in Lessons

Task & Personnel	Question Type: Form type	%	Function type	%
All other tasks				
Parents (N=458)	YN ques	37	Unknown info	45
	WH ques	36	Clar/elab/rep	31
	1 word ques	17	Known info	9
	Repetition	5	Action	8
			Conf/ack	7
Mónica & Nelson (N=487)	YN ques	33	Unknown info	46
	WH ques	28	Clar/elab/rep	35
	1 word ques	23	Conf/ack	7
	Repetition	6		
	Deictic	5		
Lessons				
Parents (N=88)	WH ques	40	Known info	77
	Deictic	27	Action	7
	YN ques	22	Clar/elab/rep	7
	Unfin dec	8		
Mónica & Nelson (N=81)	1 word ques	28	Clar/elab/rep	68
	YN ques	27	Unknown info	15
	WH ques	20	Conf/ack	14
	Deictic	20		
	Repetition	9		

Spanish primer bought in Puerto Rico when her daughter was learning to read. Brenda used the traditional approach to teaching reading in Spanish, introducing simple syllables and combining them into words. She used known information questions to assess Nelson's knowledge ("¿Cómo se dice M I?"/"How do you say M I?"), polite, non-explicit directives ("¿Cómo lo dirías?"/"How would you say it?"), and unfinished declaratives ("Una?"/ "A?"). She also used many deictics ("¿Y esta?"/"And this one?") to keep her lesson moving. The IRE sequence was used repeatedly. Overall, Brenda's questions were less specific and less elaborated than the teacher's and seemed to rely more on the context to clarify meaning. Nelson's brother Robert helped out at the beginning.

Example 4

Br: Mjum. ¿Y esta?
[Mhum. And this one?]

Ro: (whispers) Mapa.
[Map.]

Ne: Pi. Pa.
[Pipe.]

Br: ¿Y esta?
[And this one?]

Ne: ¿Papá?
[Dad?]

Br: Um hum.

Ne: ¿Pu? Dejame ver. Pu. Sí.
[Pu? Let me see. Pu. Yes.]

Br: No allí no está esa.
[No that one isn't there.]

Ne: Ma. No.

Br: Si. ¿Cómo lo dirías?
[Yes. How would you say it?]

Ne: Ma.

Br: ¿Cómo lo dirías?
[How would you say it?]

Ne: ¿La misma que esta?
[The same as this one?]

Br: Mjum. Ajá.
[Mhum. Aha.]

Ne: Puma.
[Puma.]

Br: Puma.

[Puma.]

Br: //Aquí.// Su aquí en esta.
[Here. Su here in this one.]

Br: Mjum.

Br: Mjum. ¿Qué vas a sumar? ¿Qué se suman?
[Mhum. What are you going to add? What do you add?]

Br: Nú.

Br: Numeros se suman.
[You add numbers.]

Br: Mjum. //No.//

Br: M I ¿Cómo se dice M I?
[M I How do you say M I?]

Br: ¿Ese? Ss.
[That one? Ss.]

Br: Ss. Acuérdate. ¿Qué es esto? ¿Una qué? ¿Una?
[Ss. Remember. What's this? A what? A?]

Br: Ajá...

Ne: //Aquí.//

Ne: O. Su. Ma. ¿Suma?
[Oh. A. Dd. Add?]

Ne: ¿Que sume?
[To add?]

Ne: Ah.

Ne: Números.
[Numbers.]

Ne: //¿Hasta aquí?//
[Up to here?]

Ne: Mi. Ma.

Ne: So.

Ne: Sa.

This version of the recitation script was also used by Mónica's mother; it was the only lesson script that both mothers used. As shown in Example 5, it appeared even in the few fragments of instructional talk found in the midst of informal conversations. This exchange occurred as Nelson's family sat around the kitchen table talking. Nelson wrote the numbers up to 18 himself.

Example 5

Ne: Mami. Ma ¿cómo se hace el diecinueve?
[Mommy. Ma how do you make nineteen?]

Br: Un uno.
[A one.]

Ne: ( ). ¿Un uno y un nueve?
[A one and a nine?]

Br: Mjum. Y ¿cuál viene ahora después del diecinueve?
[Mhum. And what comes after nineteen?]

Ne: Diecinueve.
[Nineteen.]

In contrast to talk in school that was dominated by the teacher, mothers and children asked questions about as frequently in the recitation script at home as they jointly constructed the lessons. As in Examples 4 and 5, the children often asked for confirmation ("¿Papá?"; "¿Un uno y un nueve?"/"A one and a nine?") or clarification ("¿La misma que esta?"/"The same as this one?") of what their mother had said. They gave partial answers which worked together with the information provided by their mothers to produce more complete answers, as in the sequence of questions about adding (in Example 4 and in the fragment above).

The lessons conducted by the mothers stood out from the ongoing flow of talk and activities; the parents almost never transformed an activity that served another purpose into a lesson. The one exception was a brief exchange on counting conducted by Mónica's father as she helped him clean the fish tank. Asking her to count the drops of a special solution, he used the recitation script complete with requests for unknown information and unfinished declaratives. It is possible that his training as a teacher provided him with the knowledge to organize this teaching moment.

In sum, Mónica and Nelson participated actively in lessons more at home than they did in school by talking more and asking more questions, though the lessons at home were much less frequent. In both settings, their language and that of the adult changed in the same characteristic ways during lessons. Adults asked many assessment questions and made fewer requests for clarification while children asked more. In contrast to questions used in school, questions asked

at home by parents and children were often less elaborated and more dependent on the context for communicating meaning.

Discussion

The analysis revealed a complex of interwoven continuities and discontinuities between the language used in lessons in the two settings. There were several important discontinuities between the homes and the school as well as successful efforts made by the teacher and parents to create continuity for Mónica and Nelson. Consistencies and contradictions in the beliefs, motives, and the language used were also revealed.

Continuities and Discontinuities

As shown in Table 3, there were a number of discontinuities between lessons at home and in school; three important and related ones stand out. All three have been described in other research about the interaction between schools and families from a variety of cultural groups. The beliefs of the families described here have been associated with other Latino families (Lynch & Hanson, 1992; Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1993; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988) . First, the teacher believed that many of the children, including Mónica and, to some extent, Nelson, were unprepared for kindergarten. While she organized activities for acquiring the needed knowledge, skills, and experiences, she felt that parents should do the same. Though she believed in maintaining Spanish and the children's culture, her conviction about many of the children's lack of experiences and of language competencies and their parents' lack of understanding and support affected her attitudes and the language she used with the entire group in lessons.

The parents defined their role vis-a-vis the school differently. It was their job to prepare their children and these parents felt that they had done so. Like many parents, middle class and poor, Puerto Rican and Anglo, they taught their children some of the knowledge and skills they thought they would need.

The second important discontinuity related to beliefs about the relative power of adults and children. Reflecting the latest in teaching approaches, Mrs. Martin believed that teachers should maintain their authority but that children should be empowered to make choices and be active. She felt that Puerto Rican adults, like herself, overemphasized their authoritarian role. Notably, the patterns of questioning that Mrs. Martin used were inconsistent with these values though they were consistent with her belief that many of the children were ill-prepared for formal lessons.

Table 3
Continuities and Discontinuities in Lessons in School and at Home

Components Lesson	School	Home
personnel	children w/ adult large/small groups	child w/ adult one-to-one, others present
cultural values	education important maintenance of L1 & culture children unprepared adult as authority, children empowered provides play experiences but doesn't participate	education important maintenance of L1 & culture child prepared child respects adult provides play experiences but doesn't participate
task	use of Spanish relevant experiences & academic content lessons separate from play but related teacher initiated & centered	use of Spanish academic content lessons separate from play parent initiated, jointly constructed
immediate motives	to provide concrete experiences to teach knowledge & skills to prompt thinking to facilitate language development	to teach knowledge & skills
script recitation	script+prompting+ open-ended questioning teacher asks questions, children answer teacher requests known information children request clarification, unknown information language more elaborated, less context-bound	recitation script parent & child ask & answer questions parent requests known information child requests clarification language less elaborated, more context-bound

The parents, on the other hand, believed that teaching their children to respect the teacher and be well-behaved and deferential was a part of their preparation for school. Though this belief was not consistent with Mrs. Martin's emphasis on active children, it was consistent with the parents' motives and cultural values. Ironically, the children were more active in lessons with their parents than they were in lessons with the teacher.

The third discontinuity involved the adults' understanding of the relation of play and activity to learning. The teacher believed that children learned through their active involvement with her and with materials and peers while the parents believed that school learning was accomplished through direct instruction by adults. Tharp and Gallimore (1988), after years of research with native Hawaiian and Mexican-American families, argue that this discontinuity may be the most critical one for poor minority children. The families they studied did not know that early play-like experiences with literacy were crucial for the later development of reading. What was missing was an explicit recognition of the learning embedded in play together with the ability to organize and talk about active learning experiences. Despite the fact that the parents valued education, wanted to prepare their children, and actively supported them around homework, many of the children had trouble learning to read.

While the discontinuities between the homes and school studied here were significant, the teacher and parents also created continuity for the children by addressing the needs and characteristics of the other setting (Table 3). Mrs. Martin related to the children as a Puerto Rican and native Spanish speaker, promoting their language development and learning in Spanish. She asked mothers to work with her, explained the importance of play, and gave parents materials for teaching their children more formally. She encouraged children to talk about their experiences. For their part, the parents attended conferences and meetings, checked their children's homework, and taught their children needed skills and information using a questioning style they knew was valued in school.

Because both the teacher and parents believed in the importance of the children succeeding in school and expected that these children could succeed, they focused on knowledge and skills traditionally valued in school and taught them using the recitation script, a traditional pattern of questioning. When lessons took place, adults and children changed the language they used in similar, identifiable ways at home and in school. They did not mix lessons with play. These

efforts created learning experiences with strong links between expectations and language use, establishing continuity for Mónica and Nelson between home and school.

Previous discussions of continuity and discontinuity have been based on the assumption that such continuity is better for children than discontinuity (Vasquez, Pease-Alvarez, & Shannon, 1994). In this case, however, the continuity was created by use of the recitation script that has been described almost universally as constraining children's language and cognitive development. While the use of this script at home probably did facilitate Mónica and Nelson's participation in lessons in school, merely matching this teaching script in both settings may not, in the end, benefit the children (Kaur, 1995). Educators must become ethnographers enough to understand patterns of interacting and language use in the home and understand what will facilitate learning in the classroom. They must build on those patterns from home as they draw children into the world of schooling and academic inquiry. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) describe this joint construction of a school culture by children and teachers. They argue that teaching "requires a conjunction of the student's everyday style of participation and discourse with the emerging schooled type of participation and discourse" (p. 134).

Implications for Practice

Research on teaching practice suggests two ways in which Mrs. Martin's questioning could be transformed into a collaborative style more consistent with her motives and with the children's learning experiences at home. The first piece of advice comes from Wells (1993) who renames the IRE sequence the initiation-response-follow-up (IRF) sequence, suggesting that the much-maligned three-part exchanges **can** be used to facilitate children's thinking. Pointing to the final move as the critical one for teachers, Wells asserts that "it is in this third step in the co-construction of meaning that the next cycle of the learning-and-teaching spiral has its point of departure" (p. 35). In other words, instead of specifying the limits of the correct answer in her initiating turn and evaluating children's responses with the third, Mrs. Martin could use her follow-up turn more frequently to provoke children to reflect on and explain what they have said. To do so, Mrs. Martin would need to believe that the children were capable of using language in this way as well as develop greater facility herself with the requests for clarification, elaboration, and even repetition that were used more often in the homes.

Other research has shown that clarification does occur more frequently in conversations in

homes of many different cultures (Rogoff, 1990; Vasquez, et al., 1994) and in non-teacher-fronted activities in school (Pica, 1987), both settings which require a sharing of information. Further analysis is needed to determine when and for what purposes requests for clarification were used in Mónica and Nelson's families. Clarification requests may be associated with language that is less elaborated and more context-bound and with family members' failure to consistently attend to each others' turns, as well as with greater responsivity among speech partners.

Second, Wells (1985) argues that teachers could learn from the reciprocity of parent-child interactions. In the interactions studied by Wells in white working-class homes in Britain as in the interactions described here, children appear to be in relatively greater control of the talk, and, concomitantly, to display higher levels of language competency. Wells suggests that the lack of ability so often apparent in school may be partly the result of constraining and teacher-dominated patterns of talk in school rather than insufficient preparation at home.

Several researchers (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1993; Vasquez et al., 1994) working with Mexican-American children, describe a pattern of child initiation in which children exercise a measure of control over learning at home. While not addressed here, initiation of learning activities with parents and older siblings by Mónica and Nelson was frequent. This suggests that if Mrs. Martin were to further develop her ability to elicit and listen to children's talk, especially when lessons focused on academic content not just personal experiences, she might see higher levels of participation and competence and be persuaded that the children were more prepared than she thought.

In addition to these changes related to language use, previous research (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988) suggests that Mrs. Martin emphasize her work with parents, helping them to understand the value of informal, play-related learning. Materials sent home that encourage play and culturally appropriate parent-child interaction would be one way of stimulating both activity and parents' understanding (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1993). Helping parents identify the many interactions and materials in their homes that facilitate children's learning would also be important. This work would need to acknowledge and build on the parents' formal instruction of their children and the concern and values that underlie them (Goldenberg, 1995).

Finally, it is important to recognize the need for school-wide changes too in any effort to

improve teaching and learning in classrooms. The institution of an all-day kindergarten with smaller enrollment and a mandate to enact more developmentally appropriate practices would support Mrs. Martin's desire to provide children with more experiential and inquiry-based learning as well as more one-to-one interactions.

Implications for Research on Latino Families

The use of the recitation script by Mónica and Nelson's parents seems unusual; most other research claims that it is seldom or never used in the homes of poor minority children in general or of Latino children specifically (Pease-Alvarez & Vasquez, 1994). As subjects in experimental research (Moreno, 1991) Chicano parents are described as using more direct and controlling language with young children characterized by unknown information questions and directives.

Though Mónica and Nelson's parents may not be typical Puerto Rican parents, they may be representative of some Puerto Rican parents who are engaged in their children's learning and who occasionally use the recitation script. In contrast to most of the research, a few recent ethnographic studies with Mexican-American families (Vasquez et al., 1994) do describe parents' use of language and interaction patterns usually associated with middle-class Anglo families and schools. These parents assist their children's thinking with requests for clarification and elaboration when talking with their children informally. They too saw themselves as active agents in their children's learning. Analysis of the informal conversations in the two homes studied is needed to identify the presence of this kind of assistance and to explore talk in informal interactions for further evidence of supportive interactions.

Other research has described the importance of learning interactions with siblings in Mexican-American homes. Farver (1993) found that older siblings in Mexican-American families were more skillful at scaffolding play than Anglo siblings. Their interactions constructing play activities with their younger brothers and sisters were similar to those of Anglo mothers. Perez, Barajas, Dominguez, Goldberg, Juarez, Saab, Vergara, and Callanan (1994) found that siblings in Mexican-American homes learned from each other, with younger children teaching older ones as well as the reverse.

Data collected for this study indicate that similar interactions occurred in these Puerto Rican homes. Once it becomes clearer how learning experiences involving siblings are organized and what kinds of teaching and learning occur in them, it may make sense for teachers to

encourage peer and multi-age interactions in children's classrooms as well.

Complementarity and Convergence

In conclusion, one way to establish continuity for children is to build on the complementarity that already exists between some home and school settings (Goldenberg, 1995; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Wells, 1985). Much of the previous research has highlighted discontinuities between distinct styles in these settings along with efforts to recreate home interaction patterns in school or to train parents to recreate school interaction patterns at home. The use of the recitation script by mothers in these homes, even though this use is apparently infrequent, is significant because it suggests that parents are influenced by the kinds of language used in school and can adjust their teaching styles to account for what they perceive to be valued in school. School becomes one of several sources, including parents' cultural heritage, that influence how parents talk and interact with their children (Vasquez et al., 1994).

This pattern of convergence of language use styles within these homes points to a more complex and dynamic process than the comparison of home and school settings characterized one dimensionally by continuity **or** discontinuity. Instead, similarities are interwoven with differences as parents, teachers, and children actively affect and are affected by each other. As the professional participants in this process, teachers must attend to its reciprocal nature as they work with parents—teaching them and learning from them—to combine everyday language use with language needed for the growth of learning and inquiry in school.

References

Attinasi, J., Pedraza, P., Poplack, S., & Pousada, A. (1982). *Intergenerational Perspectives on Bilingualism: from Community to Classroom.* (Final report No. G--78-0091). Washington, DC: NIE.

Azmitia, M., Cooper, C.R., & Garcia, E. (1992). *Bridging Home, School, and Community: Implications for the Educational Achievement of Low Income Mexican American and European American Children.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the AERA, San Francisco, CA.

Bilingual-Multicultural Program Office. (1995). Cleveland Public Schools, Cleveland, OH.

Cazden, C.B. (1988). *Classroom Discourse: The Language of Teaching and Learning.* Portsmouth: Heinemann.

de Acosta, M. (1993). *The Cleveland Hispanic Community and Education: A Struggle for Voice*. Cleveland, OH: Urban Child Research Center, Cleveland State University.

Farver, J. M. (1993). Cultural Differences in Scaffolding Pretend Play: A Comparison of American and Mexican Mother-Child and Sibling-Child Pairs. In K. MacDonald (Ed.), *Parent-Child Play: Descriptions and Implications*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Gallimore, R. & Goldenberg, C. (1993). Activity Settings of Early Literacy: Home and School Factors in Children's Emergent Literacy. In E.A. Forman, N. Minick, & C.A. Stone (Eds.), *Contexts for Learning: Sociocultural Dynamics in Children's Development* (pp. 315-335). NY: Oxford University Press.

Goldenberg, C. (1995). *Family Literacy and Latino Families: When Paradigms Clash*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the AERA, San Francisco, CA.

Gregory, E. (1993). What Counts as Reading in the Early Years' Classroom? *British Journal of Education Psychology, 63*, 214-230.

Gregory, E. (1994) Cultural Assumptions and Early Years' Pedagogy: the Effect of the Home Culture on Minority Children's Interpretation of Reading in School. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 7*, 111-124.

Heath, S.B. (1982). Questioning at Home and at School: A Comparative Study. In G. Spindler (Ed.), *Doing the Ethnography of Schooling: Educational Anthropology in Action* (pp. 102-131). NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Heath, S.B. (1986). Sociocultural Contexts of Language Development. In California State Department of Education, *Beyond Language: Social and Cultural Factors in Schooling Language Minority Students* (pp. 143-186). Los Angeles: EDAC, California State University.

Kaur, B. (1995). *Match and Mismatch Between the Literacy Contexts at School and Home: Consequences for Beginning Learners*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the AERA, San Francisco, CA.

Lynch, E.W. & Hanson, M.J. (1992). *Developing Cross-Cultural Competence: A Guide for Working with Young Children and Their Families*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

MacLure, M. & French, P. (1981). A Comparison of Talk at Home and at School. In G. Wells (Ed.), *Learning Through Interaction: The Study of Language Development* (pp. 205-239). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McCollum, P. (1989). Turn-Allocation in Lessons with North American and Puerto Rican Students: A Comparative Study. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 20*, 135-155.

Mehan, H. (1979). *Learning Lessons: Social Organization in the Classroom*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Moreno, R.P. (1991). Maternal Teaching of Preschool Children in Minority and Low Status Families: a Critical Review. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 6,* 395-410.

Morgan, N. & Saxton, J. (1991). *Teaching, Questioning and Learning*. London: Routledge.

Pease-Alvarez, C. & Vasquez, O. (1994). Language Socialization in Ethnic Minority Communities. In F. Genesee (Ed.), *Educating Second Language Children: The Whole Child, the Whole Curriculum, the Whole Community* (pp. 82-102). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Perez, D., Barajas, N., Dominguez, M., Goldberg, J., Juarez, R., Saab, M., Vergara, F., & Callanan, M. (1994, Fall). Siblings Providing One Another with Opportunities to Learn. *Focus on Diversity, 5,* 1-5.

Pica, T. (1987). Second Language Acquisition, Social Interaction, and the Classroom. *Applied Linguistics, 8,* 3-21.

Rodriguez-Brown, F.V. (1987). Questioning Patterns and Language Proficiency in Bilingual Students. *NABE Journal, 11,* 165-188.

Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in Thinking: Cognitive Development in a Social Context.* NY: Oxford University Press.

Rogoff, B., Mosier, C., Mistry, J., & Goncu, A. (1993). Toddlers' Guided Participation and Their Caregivers in Cultural Activity. In E.A. Forman, N. Minick, & C.A. Stone (Eds.), *Contexts for Learning: Sociocultural Dynamics in Children's Development* (pp. 230-253). NY: Oxford University Press.

Tharp, R.G. & Gallimore, R. (1988). *Rousing Minds to Life: Teaching, Learning, and Schooling in Social Context.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thompson Elementary School. (1992-1993). *Annual Progress Report.*

Tizard, B. & Hughes, M. (1984). *Young Children Learning*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Vasquez, O.A., Pease-Alvarez, L., & Shannon, S.M. (1994). *Pushing Boundaries: Language and Culture in a Mexicano Community*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vishnevsky, Z. (1991, May 10). Language Barrier Detours Students. *Cleveland Plain Dealer,* p. 4.

Vogt, L.A., Jordan, C. & Tharp, R. (1987) Explaining School Failure, Producing School Success. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 18,* 276-286.

Volk, D. (1995). A Case Study of Parent Involvement in the Homes of Three Puerto Rican Kindergartners. *The Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students, 14,* 89-113.

Volk, D. (in press). Question Use in the Home and School Contexts of Puerto Rican Kindergartners. *NABE Journal.*

Weisner, T.S., Gallimore, R., & Jordan, C. (1993). Unpackaging Cultural Effects of Classroom Learning: Hawaiian Peer Assistance and Child-Generated Activity. In R.n. Roberts (Ed.), *Coming Home to Preschool: the Sociocultural Context of Early Education* (pp. 59-87). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Wells, G. (1985). *Language, Learning and Education.* Windsor, UK: Nfer-Nelson.

Wells, G. (1986). *The Meaning Makers: Children Learning Language and Using Language to Learn.* Kent: Hodder & Stoughton.

Wells, G. (1993). Reevaluating the IRF Sequence: A Proposal for the Articulation of Theories of Activity and Discourse for the Analysis of Teaching and Learning in the Classroom. *Linguistics and Education, 5,* 1-37.

Appendix: Question Variables

Question form		WH
		YesNo/Intonation
		Alternative
		Unfinished declarative
		Tag
		One word
		Formulaic
		Repetition
		Vocative
		Deictic
Question function (requests for)	Unknown information	
		Known information
		Action
		Known info/Action
		Clarification/Elaboration/Repetition
		Confirmation/Acknowledgement
		Permission
		Attention
Language		Spanish
		English
		Codeswitch
Setting		School
		Nelson's home
		Mónica's home
Personnel		Target child
		Teacher
		Peer
		Parent
		Younger sibling/relative (2+ yrs.)
		Younger/older sibling/relative (1-2 yrs.)
		Older sibling/relative (2+ yrs.)
Group size		One-to-one
		Small group
		Whole class
Task	Lesson	
		Play (w/ peer); Play (w/adult, older sib/relative)
		Independent work time
		Sitting around/Talking/Eating/TV watching
		Management/Planning/Arguing
		Personal reporting
		Chores/Clean-up
		Assessment
		Homework